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FM AMEMBASSY HARARE  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3803  
INFO RUCNSAD/SOUTHERN AF DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY COLLECTIVE  
RUEHAR/AMEMBASSY ACCRA 2485  
RUEHDS/AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA 2609  
RUEHRL/AMEMBASSY BERLIN 1102  
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 1878  
RUEHDK/AMEMBASSY DAKAR 2233  
RUEHKM/AMEMBASSY KAMPALA 2658  
RUEHNR/AMEMBASSY NAIROBI 5086  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC  
RUZEJAA/JAC MOLESWORTH RAF MOLESWORTH UK  
RHMFISS/EUCOM POLAD VAIHINGEN GE  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC  
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 1750  
RHEHAAA/NSC WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 HARARE 001100

SIPDIS

AF/S FOR B. WALCH  
DRL FOR N. WILETT  
ADDIS ABABA FOR USAU  
ADDIS ABABA FOR ACSS  
STATE PASS TO USAID FOR E. LOKEN AND L. DOBBINS  
STATE PASS TO NSC FOR SENIOR AFRICA DIRECTOR B. PITTMAN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/09/2018  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [ASEC](#) [PHUM](#) [ZI](#)  
SUBJECT: RASH OF ABDUCTIONS TARGET HUMAN RIGHTS GROUPS AND  
MDC

Classified By: CDA Katherine Dhanani for reason 1.4 (d)

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SUMMARY  
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1. (SBU) Since December 3, five individuals with ties to human rights groups or the MDC have been abducted by armed men wearing plain clothes and driving unmarked vehicles. Additionally, the 14 MDC members (and a baby) seized over a month ago are still missing, as are two MDC members abducted at the end of November. Human rights groups and lawyers have been unsuccessful at locating these individuals at police stations, and speculation abounds that they may have been seized by the CIO, military intelligence, or police intelligence. END SUMMARY.

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Human Rights Leaders Disappearing  
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2. (SBU) Otto Saki of Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights (ZLHR) confirmed that Broderick Takawira and Pascal Gonzo, both members of the human rights organization Zimbabwe Peace Project (ZPP), were abducted from ZPP's Harare offices the morning of December 8. According to ZPP chairman Alois Chaumba, a group of about six men driving an unmarked car took them without disclosing their destination or whether they were facing charges. Takawira is the ZPP coordinator for Harare province and Gonzo is a driver.

3. (SBU) Meanwhile, the whereabouts of the national director of the ZPP, Jestina Mukoko, are still unknown. Mukoko was abducted from her home by plain-clothes armed men driving unmarked vehicles at five AM on December 3. Persistent inquiries by ZLHR at area police stations yielded a letter from chief police superintendent Nzombe stating that the police were not in custody of Mukoko and were treating her disappearance as a kidnapping.

14. (U) On the evening of December 5, Zacharia Nkomo was seized by four plain clothes men from his home in a Masvingo township. Nkomo is the brother of a leading human rights lawyer, Harrison Nkomo.

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Seized MDC Official Raises MDC Total to 18  
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15. (SBU) Gandhi Mudzingwa, an aide to MDC leader Morgan Tsvangirai, was seized by a group of armed men while driving in Harare on December 8, according to MDC spokesperson George Sibotshiwe. The group of 14 MDC members (and a baby) abducted in Banket in Mashonaland West in late October is still missing. Additionally, according to MDC officials, on November 25, the MDC's director of security, Chris Diamini as well as another MDC member were abducted. The whereabouts of all the MDC members are unknown.

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Lots of Speculation, No Answers  
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16. (SBU) According to ZLHR, the Central Intelligence Organization, the Central Investigations Department of the police, and military intelligence all conduct operations using plain clothes officers and unmarked vehicles. It is possible the police are unaware of the whereabouts of some or all of these individuals in which case petitions of habeas corpus and court orders directed at the police will have no

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effect. (NOTE: A court order was issued to the police to produce the Banket MDC members; there has been no compliance. A habeas corpus petition regarding Jestina Mukoko was to be heard by the High Court today. END NOTE.)

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COMMENT  
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17. (C) The recent surge of abductions appears to be part of an orchestrated and politically-motivated campaign. We see two motives for the seizures:

i) ZANU-PF has decided a political resolution with the MDC is unlikely to happen and has chosen to unleash a new wave of violence and intimidation to consolidate their position and weaken the MDC; or

ii) Elements within the military, police, or CIO are trying to sabotage the possibility of a deal that could weaken their interests or expose them to reprisal.

18. (C) Whatever the motive, the GOZ--which has been arguing to SADC that MDC has had insurgent training bases in Botswana--may try to allege that the recently abducted individuals are involved in the concocted Botswana conspiracy. We have received reports that the GOZ is alleging that the Banket MDC members were involved in training camps in Botswana, and Jestina Mukoko was reportedly involved in a human rights training program in Botswana within the last couple of weeks. END COMMENT.

DHANANI